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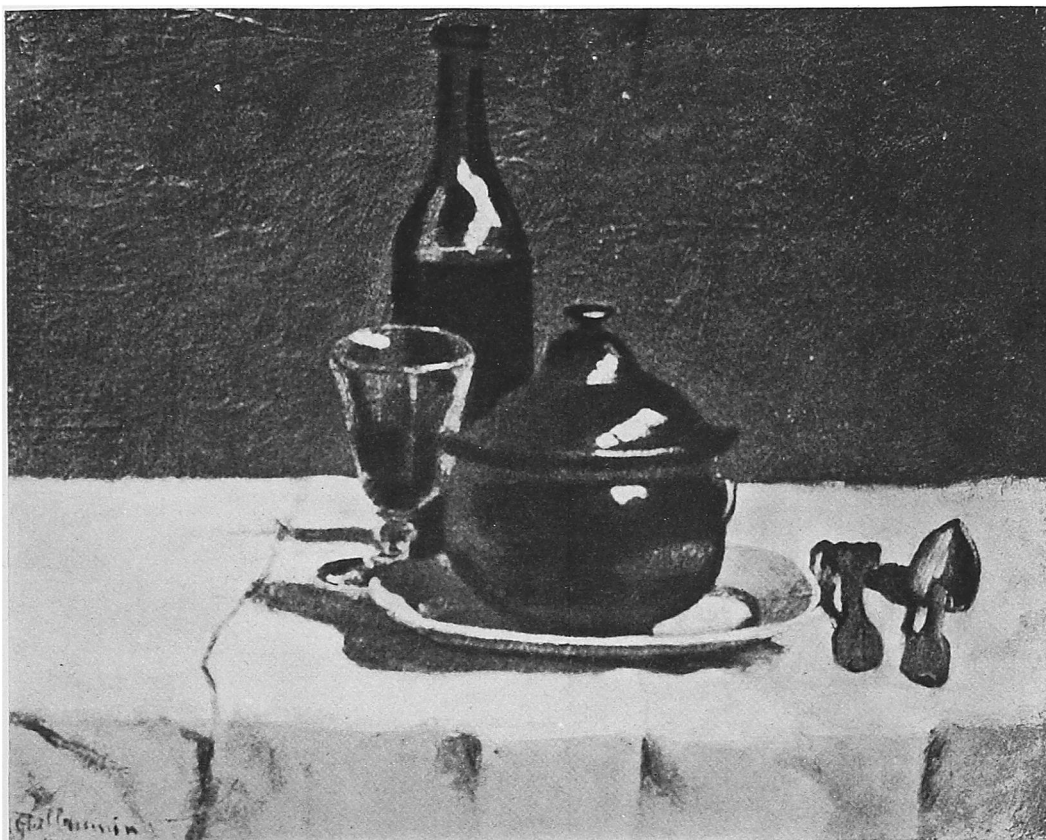
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LAMLETTE, SEINE ET OISE, 1884
BY ARMAND GUILLAUMIN

—Collection M. Personne



LA MARMITE, 1867
By ARMAND GUILLAUMIN

—Collection M. Eugène Blot

Armand Guillaumin

By CHARLES LOUIS BORGMEYER

(Chapter X—"The Master Impressionists")

LET us make an imaginary visit together to the Paris home of Monsieur and Madame Armand Guillaumin at 19 rue Servandoni before we commence to talk about Guillaumin's work. We slip into the elevator and by a judicious punching of plugs are started upwards and stop with a click in front of their door, which is opened by Monsieur himself. Madame stands directly behind him, as if they had both started for the door, but he had laughingly beaten her. At any rate,

both their faces are animated and the greetings cordial.

As we enter a medium-sized room, with the dining-room opening off of it, we see that the apartment is small, according to American ideas but quite palatial from the French standpoint and altogether cheerful and sunny from any point of view.

All around are things to see that one aches to get at; a statuette of Guillaumin by his friend Doctor Paulin; busts of family friends; marvelous Japanese banners



ROUTE DE CHATILLON A PARIS; EFFET DE NEIGE, 1878
By ARMAND GUILLAUMIN

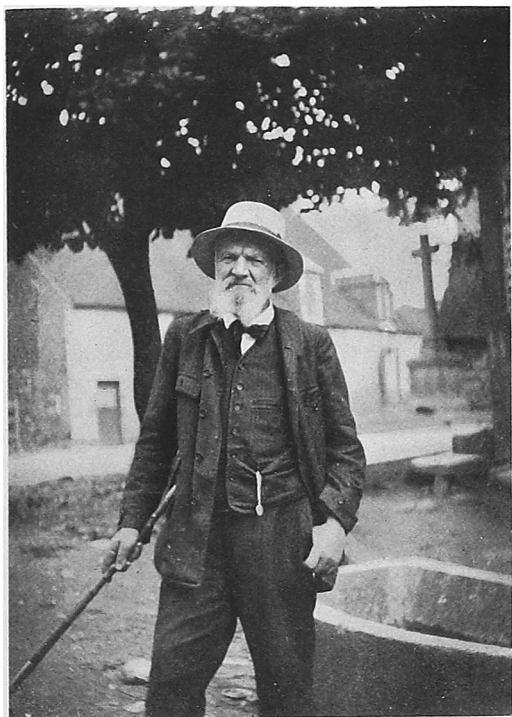
that almost paper the walls of the hall we have passed through. It is a temptation to linger over these things but we have come to see Guillaumin himself and his work, not his hoarded treasures. If you have ever seen even one picture by Guillaumin, you will realize that in his own home, his pictures would naturally dominate the scene. It is strange, too, that a man whose modesty is the first thing one sees, should, through his pictures, kill every other picture in sight.

Our host of the hour may paint "strong" pictures, but he himself is everything gentle and delightful. He is in truth seventy-three years *young*. Louis Vauxcelles wrote of him ten or twelve years ago: "By good fortune Guillaumin is living and younger

than ever. He is simple and modest, the enemy of clamor and of bluff—our dear Guillaumin—when he is in Paris, we know that he is bored, that he languishes there of darkness, and only dreams of leaving for the country, where he can paint in the open air, in open light and open nature.

He is wrinkled, but that is nothing; does not care for his publicity; indifferent to all the small intrigues of the artistic pinchbeck. He is independence incarnate. He has never flattered, has not bothered with the suggestions of merchants; has only obeyed his own temperament; is not a man-of-the-world "for a cent"; he is sincere and good—which is of more value.

Eugène Blot, in speaking of his first impression of Guillaumin told me: "The very



ARMAND GUILLAUMIN, June 25, 1908
From photograph at Crozant

first time I met him, back in 1886, I saw at once that he was one of those rare artists who forget themselves; and could anything be more touching than such an artist, or a being more sincere? Today I feel exactly the same about him: he is without 'manner,' without thought of himself. He is simple, gifted, a man who feels and enjoys things himself without mental reservation, without other occupation than to see truly, to feel well, to render well, simply, frankly, with beautiful gallantry, with fire, spirit, ardor, force and joy, with love and for his own pleasure. No premeditated arrangement, no artifice, or concession in his subjects, in order to make them popular, but the sure interest of the artist, which guides him, and makes him love the place he chooses. As he stands before his canvas, his eyes clear, childish and gay, absorbing the light thrown over the things, he is full of joy. Living his life, which is that of a painter, doing his work, which is to note

all that he sees with sincerity, and with the emotion that he feels. He paints because it is his destiny; he paints, for it is his one and great satisfaction, it is the reason of his being, of his existence. And he paints resolutely, with a large touch, with a bold stroke, almost fiercely."

He is absolutely sincere and seeks only to render the sensation which Nature gives to him. That which other painters have sought to interpret is a matter of entire indifference to him. This man of seventy-three years is not affected by public opinion he has never given the slightest heed to its demands. Whether hailed as successful by the multitude or neglected by it, he has never painted what they wanted him to do or what he may have thought they wanted him to do, but in spite of this neglect, he did succeed in his art in doing just what he wanted to do and continues to do it today. Because of this, his work holds more of interest and beauty for us than the art of men who have done, and are doing what



ARMAND GUILLAUMIN
From photograph while painting out-of-doors



DAMIETTE. SEINE ET OISE, 1884
By ARMAND GUILLAUMIN

they think other people want them to do. In art, only great artists have freed themselves from these limitations.

Eugène Blot and Louis Vauxcelles have known Guillaumin for a great many years, and I, only a short time, and still all these things are so plainly written upon his face and manner that I at once felt them without being able to express them in words as well as they, his old friends, have done. Another thing that was purely physical struck me. Some men, as they grow old, age in spirit and body and seek their creature comforts; not so with this hale and hearty Frenchman.

I can easily picture him in some primitive spot, absorbed by Nature's virgin work, not concerning himself with the discomforts of the mediocre inn that awaits

his return. His description with quick gestures towards first one picture and then another, of Crozant on the Creuse, the spot he has made his own, was so graphic, that before my eyes rose a stream of crystal, clear water bubbling over red stones and passing under heavy bushes of wonderful green; sleek cattle suggesting the nearby farm; a trout stream rushing through the tall grass swelled into fatness by the water. Other scenes, he called up, where the skies, the trees and the thick, moist undergrowth of ferns and dark bushes were reflected in the clear water. Springs smothered in moss and lichens of all colors; and over all the clean, glad air, free of the dust and sorrow and suffering of the great city of Paris.

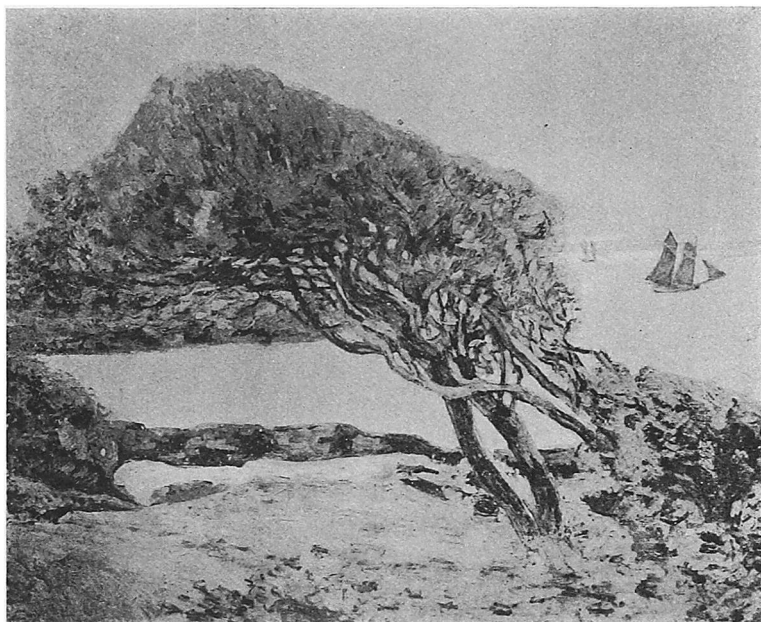
He made my eyes lift to a single bleak

hill, almost a mountain that only the stars and a few shepherds know. In color like spilt blood. "But Monsieur Guillaumin are the rocks as red as that?" "Perhaps not to you, my friend, but one must love red to give the character of the Creuse. Perhaps it will satisfy your mind, if I say they are of iron pyrites." I hasten to turn to another picture with the thought of the Philistine in the back of my head. "I must go see that country for myself," but to M. Guillaumin

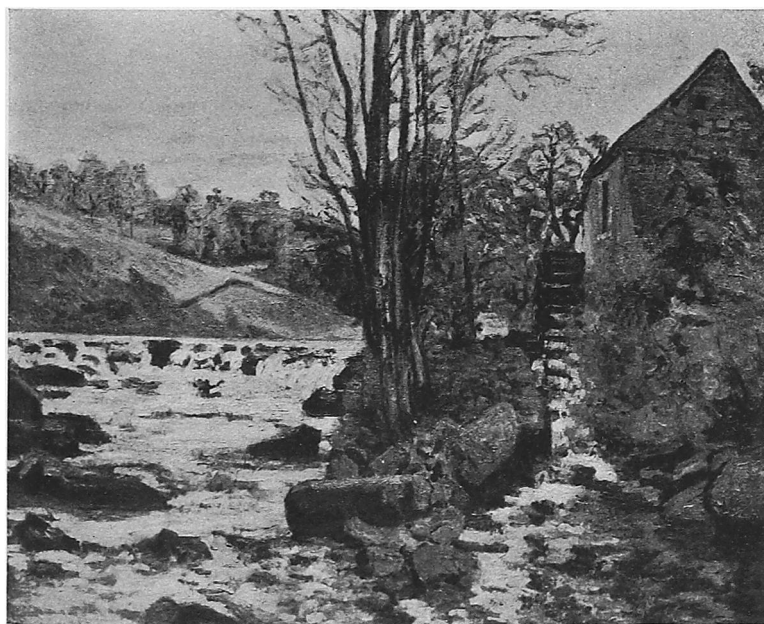
I say, "It seems to be a terrible country, this Creuse of yours!" "Yes, to you perhaps, but 'is nature always sweet

and soft? If I painted the valley of the Creuse with its volcanic soil and tormented rocks, as if it were a picnic ground for chil-

dren, I should be false to my emotions. But it is not always November morning on the Creuse with snow outlining the bare branches of the trees, or a day-break in March. See! this is gayer, we climb the bleak hill and *voilà!*" We stood on the top of the hill and felt the rush of wind through the great air spaces between ourselves and the far distant violet and blue summits that seemed to prop up the sky. A vast broken, ragged earth spread out like a turbulent sea before

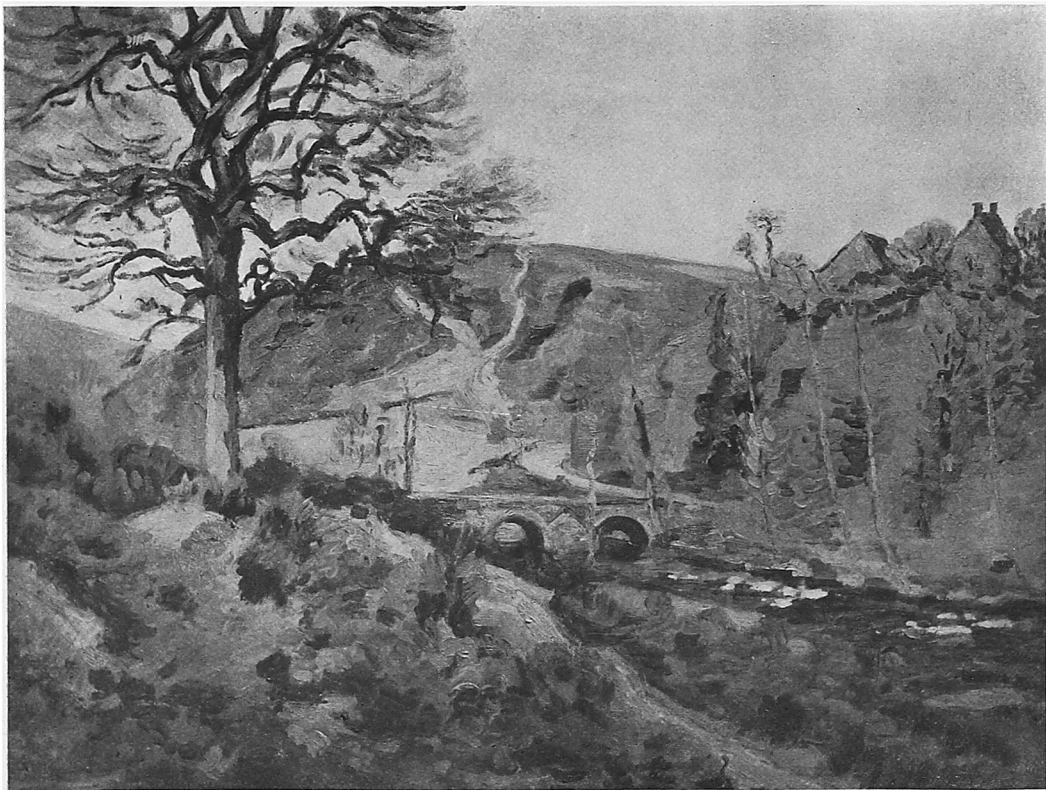


LE COUP DE VENT—Courtesy Ryerson Library, Art Institute, Chicago
By ARMAND GUILLAUMIN —Collection M. Jules Strauss



THE MILL, 1870
By ARMAND GUILLAUMIN

—Courtesy Art Institute, Chicago



ARBRE LE SOIR. CROZANT. (FIRST DAYS IN MARCH)
By ARMAND GUILLAUMIN

—Collection Charles L. Borgmeyer, New York

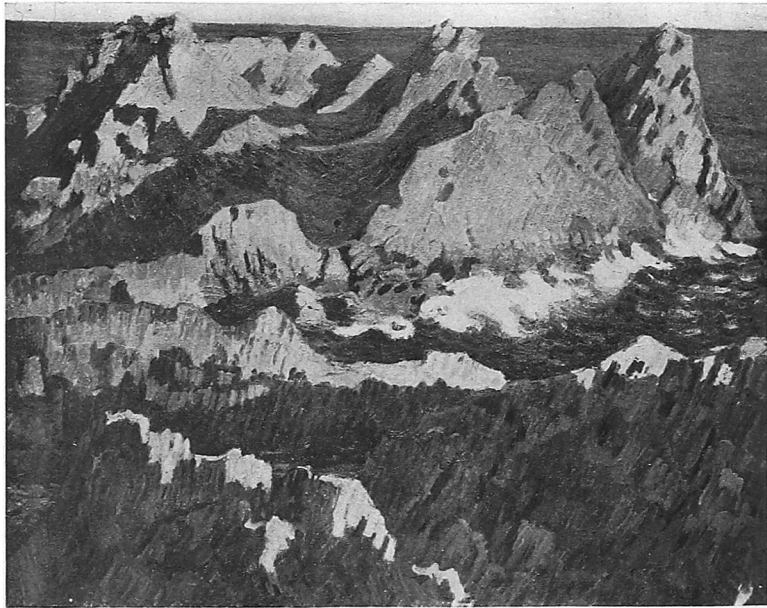
us. It was like the view of an ocean, so distant seemed the sky line, where earth and heavens met. Everywhere in the distance the purple shadows gathered; under the bushes and trees, in the nearer distance, were shadows of other colors; the grass of the fields reflected the red and gold of the sun's dying light; the sky slashed with colors of varied hues. Those adorable skies of Guillaumin! Of tender rose, emerald and turquoise blue. What life, what movement, what fluidity in the light clouds, sometimes but a puff of white that the wind carries away. No wonder that Guillaumin hungers for the hills, valleys and mountain streams of his beloved Creuse, hungers as the exile hungers for the sight of his own home. "To me," he said, "the voice of the wind through the

trees, the roar of the river, the fine free air of the mountains are life.

"Possibly this picture that I started to paint one day on the shores of the Mediterranean, and never finished, because the storm overtook me, may interest you?" Yes, that picture did interest me, as did others on the edge of the Mediterranean. In one, the waters were as blue and still as any poet's dream; in another there was all the turmoil and strife of the beautiful coming-in of the mounting wave. The red rocks that the setting sun lighted into an Inferno turned to a rosy and hazy fairyland as the world awakened; with near-by, deep moving shadows; transparent and luminous. In another one there was the sun across the sea with the wind blowing through the near-by tree. All these interested me, but how can I pass my emotion on

to you, the task is impossible, who but an artist could depict God's work? I only know that up in my skyscraper home in New York, I often live over my visits with Guillaumin, and there comes to me a vision of the pine woods, with their scent of resin, mingled with the subtle odor of the tropic foliage near the shore of the southern sea. It all comes back as something of long ago! Vaguely and intangibly, like the memory of a perfume.

I am transplanted; the subtle scents of flowering mountain-bushes fill the air with their soft flavor; the silence of those rugged country hills and valleys of the Creuse comes to me



ILE BESSE à AGAY (MEDITERRANEAN)
By ARMAND GUILLAUMIN

—Collection M. Eugène Blot

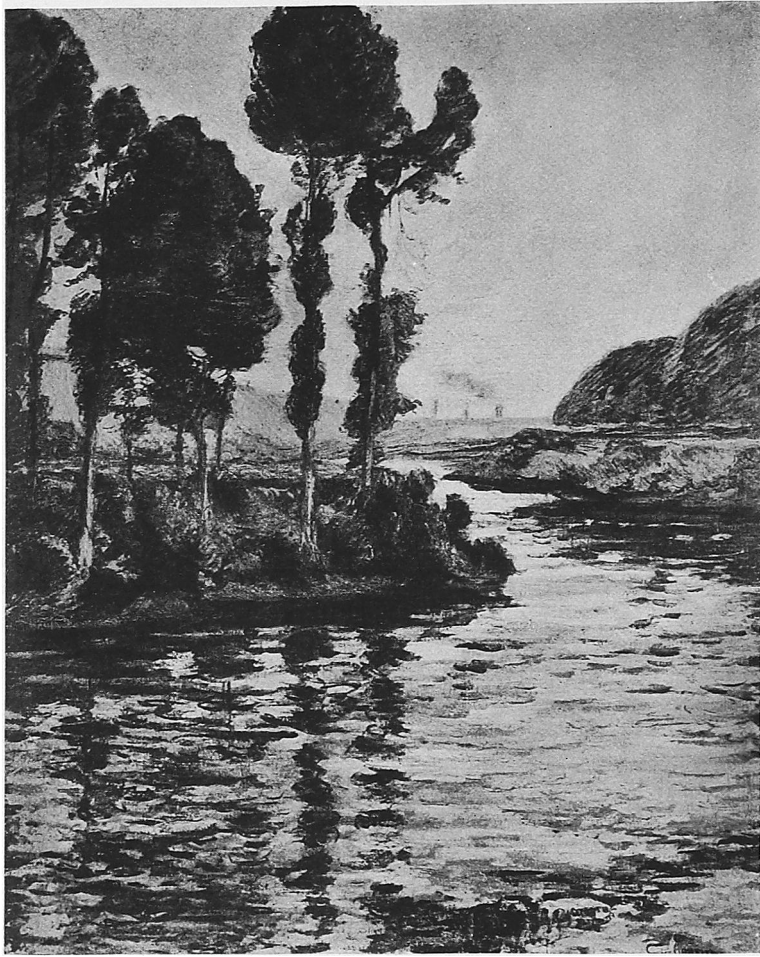
unbroken except by the stirring of the birds, the rustle of the wind or the rushing waters of the mountain stream.

On our imaginary visit to this dear, old, amusing and gay gentleman we have stayed (unconsciously long) and we have looked at many pictures, and I hope, enjoyed ourselves. We leave with a sort of paternal feeling for him that all his friends, young and old, have in common. I can no more imagine one's taking advantage of Guillaumin than of robbing a child's bank.

The story of his reception of the notice sent him in reference to his Decoration by the Legion of Honor,



MORET, 1902
By ARMAND GUILLAUMIN



SOLEIL COUCHANT
By ARMAND GUILLAUMIN

—Collection M. Lucien Sauphar

would seem quite improbable of almost any other artist I know. In 1911, the Chancellor of the Legion of Honor sent him the usual series of questions that each member of the order is asked to answer, when this honor is about to be conferred upon him. Guillaumin, never dreaming for a moment, that anyone in the political world could take the slightest interest in him, threw them into the fire. Through the interest of M. Pierre Baudin, Secretary of the Navy in the first Cabinet formed under the Presidency of M. Poincaré, who knew of the intended honor to Guillaumin, it was discovered that the pa-

pers had not been returned. M. Baudin went to a mutual friend, who in his turn went after Guillaumin. It was only through considerable diplomacy on the friend's part and a ringing in of the hurt-feelings of M. Baudin, Guillaumin's great admirer, that they succeeded in getting him to make an explanation and to ask for a new set of papers.

Can you not picture the modesty, sincerity and simplicity of the man from this? Can you not see before you the man who seeks for no recompense, but who finds in his honest and strong work satisfaction as his reward? It is this modesty of charac-

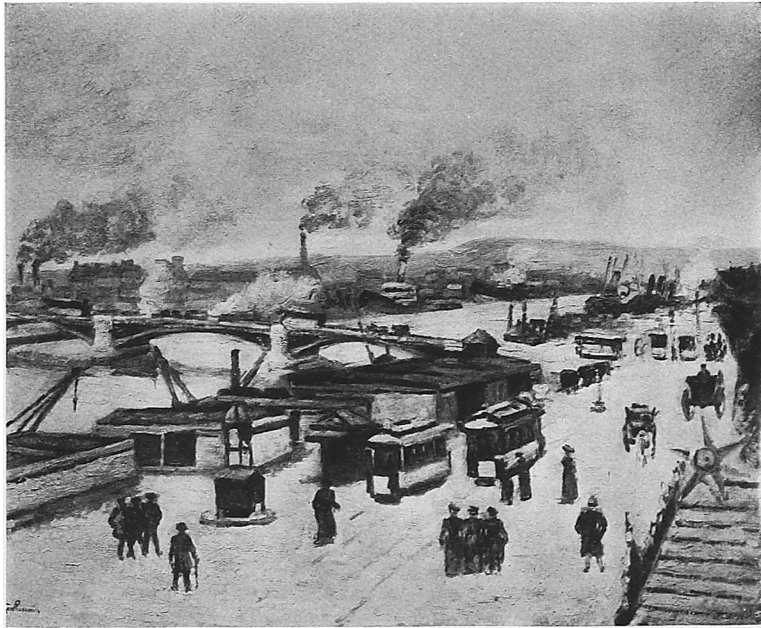
ter, this lack of "push," this absolute ignorance of publicity and self-advertising, that has kept him and his work pure and simple and prevented him from taking advantage of so many little things by which men of mediocre talent push themselves to the front.

Many events have gone into Guillaumin's seventy-three years of life, to make him and his work what it is now. A quick glance over some of these years may be interesting.

He was born in Paris in 1841, but soon went to Moulins, France. When he was seventeen, he was sent to an uncle in Paris, with the idea of his becoming a clerk in his

store. From all accounts he was most unsatisfactory, and soon left to take a place with the Orleans Railway Company. This position left him free evenings and Sun-

days. These leisure hours he spent in taking drawing lessons at the Public School. When he was twenty-three he knew enough to enter the *Académie Suisse*, a free school, without instructors. He, like all the students in those days, did some copying at the Louvre. He laughs at them now, and frankly says they were bad. During his five or six years' stay at the *Académie Suisse*, he had as a fellow student, Paul Cézanne, with whom he en-



QUAI DE PARIS À ROUEN, 1904
By ARMAND GUILLAUMIN



HOLLANDE, APRIL, 1904
By ARMAND GUILLAUMIN



ECLUSE DE GENETIN. CROZANT (EVENING, FIRST DAYS IN SEPTEMBER, 1907, MILLDAM)
By ARMAND GUILLAUMIN —Collection Charles L. Borgmeyer, New York

tered into a life-long intimate friendship.

It was Cézanne who took him to the *Café Guerbois*, to join the group of painters, who in later years became known as Impressionists. Among these were, Manet, Claude Monet, Degas, Renoir, Sisley, Pissarro, Éva Gonzales, Caillebotte, Forain, Toulouse-Lautrec, and Mary Cassatt. Up to this time Guillaumin was painting in rather sombre colors, with a tonality akin to that of Courbet, but he soon came to adopt the new scale of bright colors of his companions.

To repeat the story of this group of men from the time of the *Salon des Refusés*, in 1863, to their final exhibition in 1886, as a group, would take too long. Guillaumin was in the thick of the fight, suffering hard-

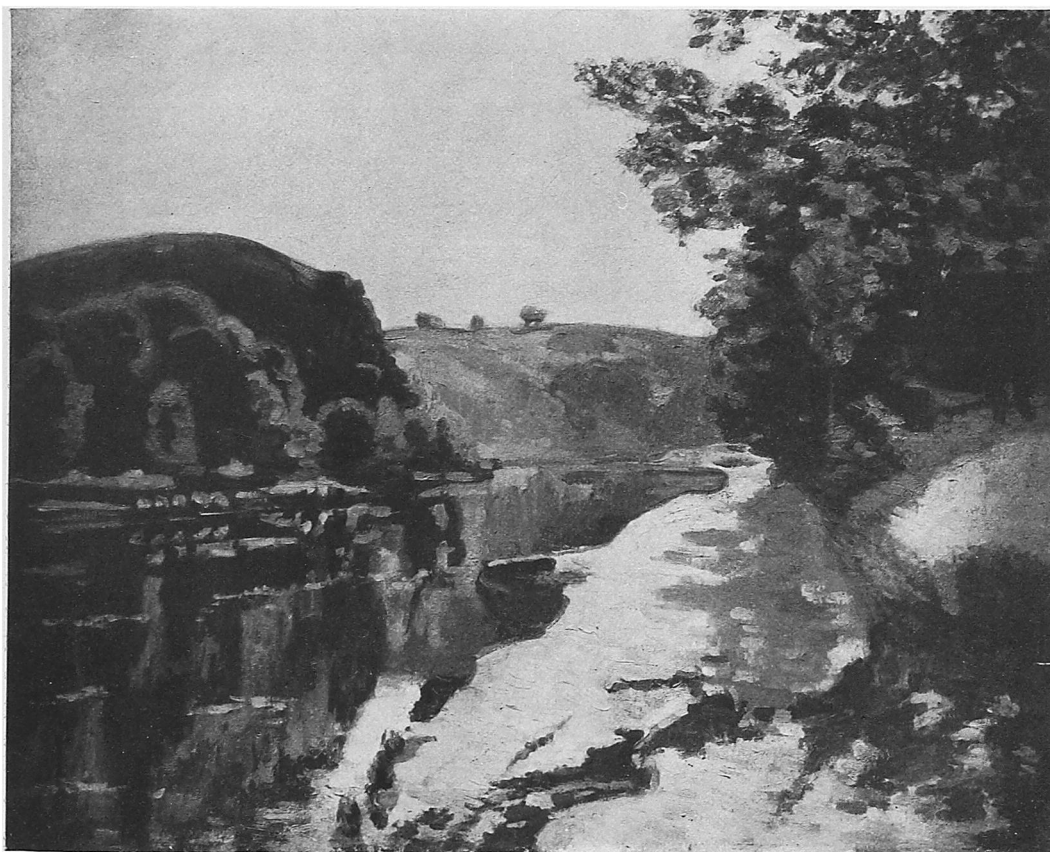
ship as the others did. He was able to help them to many a needed meal, through a friendship of his childhood. Théodore Duret told me the story. It seems there was a restaurant keeper by the name of Murer, who kept a shop in the Boulevard Voltaire. He loathed his business, his tastes being all for art and literature; in later years, when he had enough money saved, he gave up his shop and both wrote and painted. While he still had the shop, he came to know the Impressionists through Guillaumin, and it grew to be the usual thing with him to provide them with meals on certain days. Renoir and Sisley were heaviest in his debt, but that did not worry them, as when they had eaten a certain number of meals, he took a picture in payment. He was a real

benefactor to them all, for he not only fed them, but he bought and paid for, in good money, pictures that the Paris world was shrieking over at the time.

During these days of poverty, Guillaumin painted near-at-home subjects; scenes in the city of Paris, particularly along the quais; the outlying suburbs, Charenton, Ivry and other nearby villages. *Confluent de la Seine et de la Marne* (1872), [illustrated in Chapter II of "The Master Impressionists";] and *Route de Chatillon à Paris; Effet de Neige* (1878), shown in this article, are fair examples of his work at this period. He tells me he has never had an exclusive period for any one subject, that both still-life and figures have always interested him. He impressed upon me, that he painted what he liked in the

old days, just as he does now, and painted when he liked and never unless the object created an emotion in him. There are a few still-life pictures by Guillaumin that make one wish he had oftener been moved by material things. A *Plate of Onions* that hangs in his dining-room, rouses one's covetousness uselessly as "They belong to me," says his charming wife, and that means they are not for sale. Another possession of Madame Guillaumin, is an early *Portrait of Madame Guillaumin*, herself, seated in a garden. This, one would like to beg, borrow or steal, its note is so joyful.

The Tête d'Enfant (1879) of the Hayashi sale (published in Chapter V of "The Master Impressionist"), I was fortunate enough to get, M. Guillaumin said he remembered it well, it was the head of the



CROZANT, ROCHE DE L'ECHO, 1894
By ARMAND GUILLAUMIN



ST. CHERON, 1892
By ARMAND GUILLAUMIN

daughter of their hotel-keeper, one of his few portraits. Guillaumin was the friend and almost daily intimate of Tadamasa Hayashi, who naturally had an intimate knowledge of Japanese art. They exchanged perhaps as many as twenty of his canvases for as many Japanese color prints and drawings. Some of these almost priceless things are in his drawing room today, and it was with difficulty that I could get him back upon the subject of his own work, after I had made the mistake of noticing the Japanese things.

Guillaumin's *Saint Julien des Chaze* was the pearl of the Hayashi Collection. This particular picture now belongs to one of Guillaumin's stanch admirers, Docteur Viau

of Paris. Others belonging to this collection of modern French Art, that all France knew and that made a stir in Tokio in 1900, have found permanent homes in the collections of five or six true lovers of art in New York City. It may be interesting to add that three of these buyers were wise enough to be influenced by the uninterested advice given by a critic on one of the daily papers. But that is a story of today. Let us go back to 1872, when Guillaumin was a young man, suffering from the humiliation of a refusal of his offering to the Salon. He never gave them a second chance, as after that, he sent his pictures to the famous Impressionist Exhibitions lasting from 1874 to 1886.

In answer to my question: "Oh, yes I exhibited at nearly all those exhibitions. I had *sou* pieces put on my frame like the others, and that is all I ever did receive in those days. They were very good *sous*, too!"

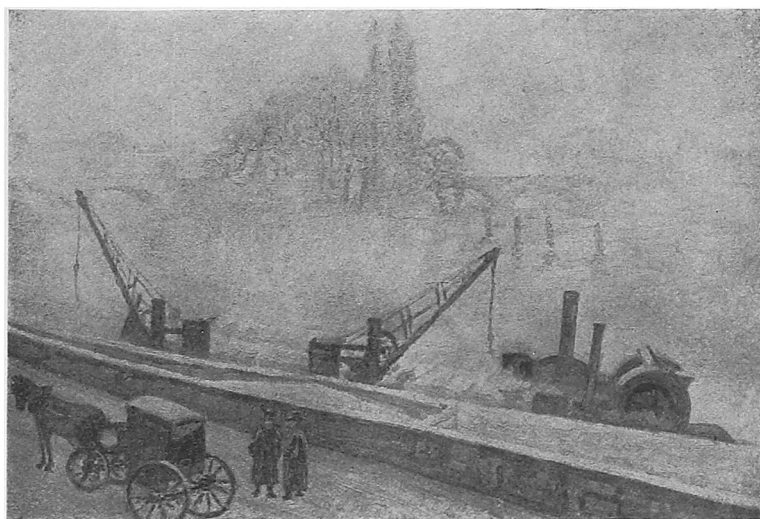
In speaking of the influence the Impressionists had on one another, he seemed to feel he had influenced no one; he said: "Certainly Pissarro, Cézanne and I had, at one time, about the same ideas—but ideas and opinions, like other things, vary." He never painted regularly with any of them, still I find that not infrequently, in early Guillaumin, there is something in touch and method of execution, that reminds me of Claude Monet, so much so that one might think Claude Monet had touched the canvas. Again some of his canvases have



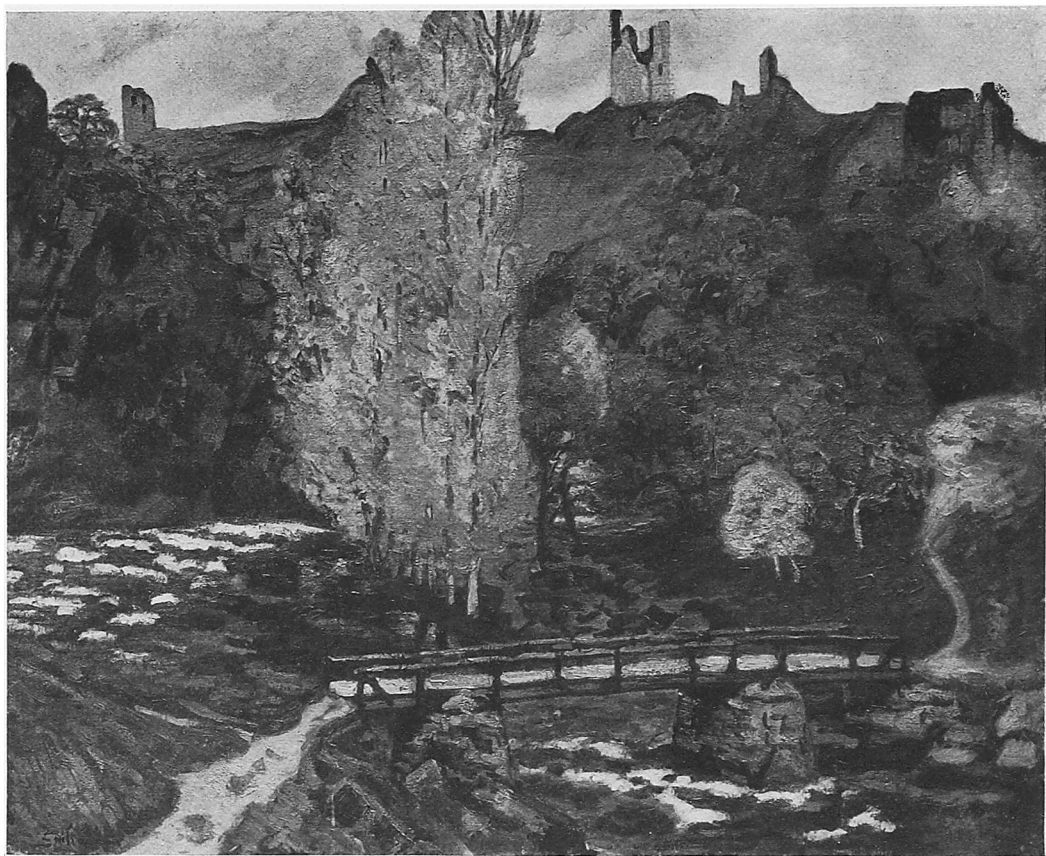
ROUEN, 1904
By ARMAND GUILLAUMIN

—Courtesy Musée de Rouen, France

Cézanne's scale of tones to such an extent that the first glance gives one the sensation of standing before a Cézanne. Pissarro and Guillaumin are said to have influenced, even taught, Gauguin and Van Gogh—to this M. Guillaumin says: "I do not know that Pissarro had any influence over Van Gogh, Gauguin at one time imitated Pissarro. Personally I influenced neither of them; certainly they were never my pupils. I never had any pupils!" In speaking of the Pointillists, Seurat and Signac, he confesses to having been interested in their work at one time but that time no longer exists; he frankly says it took too much time for him to ever have tried it and as for Cubists *et als.*, he says: "I



QUAI ROUEN, 1904
By ARMAND GUILLAUMIN



MOULINS BRIGAND, 1894
By ARMAND GUILLAUMIN

—Collection M. Louis Bernard

think simply nothing! Nothing comes from nothing!"

The truth is that Guillaumin's intensely personal interpretation of art is due to many things. In the first place, he received but little of the usual course of training. From the very beginning he painted instinctively, and also from the very beginning he ignored public opinion. He has never attempted anything beyond his powers, nor has he been tempted to imitate the work of other artists; his is a sane art, neither over-expressed nor exaggerated; and it pleases us just because of this. He has always expressed his own natural delight in certain kinds of beauty with complete disregard to the sort of representation that the public might expect to find in that beauty. What-

ever his subject, he has painted it because it gave him pleasure to paint it.

Guillaumin's method of painting, or choice of subject, is not a premeditated indifference to public opinion; it is not a revolt against it; it is merely a personal way of expressing an emotion for which he can find no other method or process. The vision of other artists undoubtedly evokes in them a similar emotion but they often fail, because they have not a method or process sufficiently personal to express their emotion. They have failed because their method of expression was one of imitation, and an imitator cannot express himself naturally. Nearly always close imitation prevents any kind of expression and only satisfies those who see no difference

between real and sham art. A copy of a work of art is not and can never be the same thing as a work of art. An imitator usually produces not a work of art but gives to us an imitation of a style.

Guillaumin found his personal artistic expression in the presence of the regions he loved. This, a difficult thing at all times, he could never have accomplished, had he imitated an expression of the past, or had he attempted to paint his pictures in some one else's style; for then he would have necessarily lessened his power of expression, and in consequence lessened our enjoyment.

Guillaumin is a true artist, for he is a creator. He makes his art out of his own experiences. The artist is an artist because

he can communicate to us, in his art, the emotions which his own experiences have aroused in him, so that they become our emotions. We all have emotions, but we have not the power of communicating them to others and thus adding them to the experience of mankind.

Guillaumin, far apart from the world of fashion and affairs paints a picture because he has an emotion, caused by his joy in the sight of a mountain, an undulating plain, a stretch of the sea, which he longs to communicate to us. This emotion cannot be cultivated or created by a process of reasoning, although it cannot satisfy itself without it. Something must happen to the mind of the artist, something must be conceived in it through the joy of the vision. The picture is the effect of this emotion



CROZANT PUY BARION (EVENING IN SEPTEMBER, 1906)

By ARMAND GUILLAUMIN

—Collection Charles L. Borgmeyer, New York



ROUEN, 1904
By ARMAND GUILLAUMIN

—Collection M. Personnez, Paris

of the mind's comprehension and its conception, not the cause.

Guillaumin gives expression to his emotion in the form which moved him, hence, the same mystery which moves us in nature, appeals to us in his pictures, and gives birth to the same convincing wonder. The admiration and worship of nature, the pleasure, the joy, the happiness it evokes is emotional, it is impulsive, it is spontaneous.

We find less change in his work during a period of forty years, than seems possible in one who has passed from comparative youth to old age; but that is just it, Guillaumin is not old in vision. Arsene Alexandre, in writing of Guillaumin recently, calls

attention to this remarkable freshness of vision. To show how usual it is to see things less brightly as the years pass, we have but to try the experiment of walking along the Seine, as he suggests, noting the blue of the water, the red of the rocks, the black of the smoke; and then return in ten or twenty years and see if it all has not darkened. "At all events if it is not nature that is more somber, it will be you. The effect will be the same." No, Guillaumin's vision has not grown old.

As to other changes: His studio is still roofed by the open sky, and swept by the winds of heaven. His pictures are entirely finished out of doors, never tampered with later. He uses the same pure colors, never

black or brown, and he tells me that he thinks his brush work has grown no freer with age, but that he may give that impression as he tries to simplify more and more.

The problem of joining his perspective planes without sharp edges or abrupt contours has caused him years of work and perseverance, to arrive where he has today. Colored shadows have been one of the problems he has always sought to solve, but he does not yet feel satisfied with the results he has obtained. Think of this old man, still trying to steal nature's secrets from her.

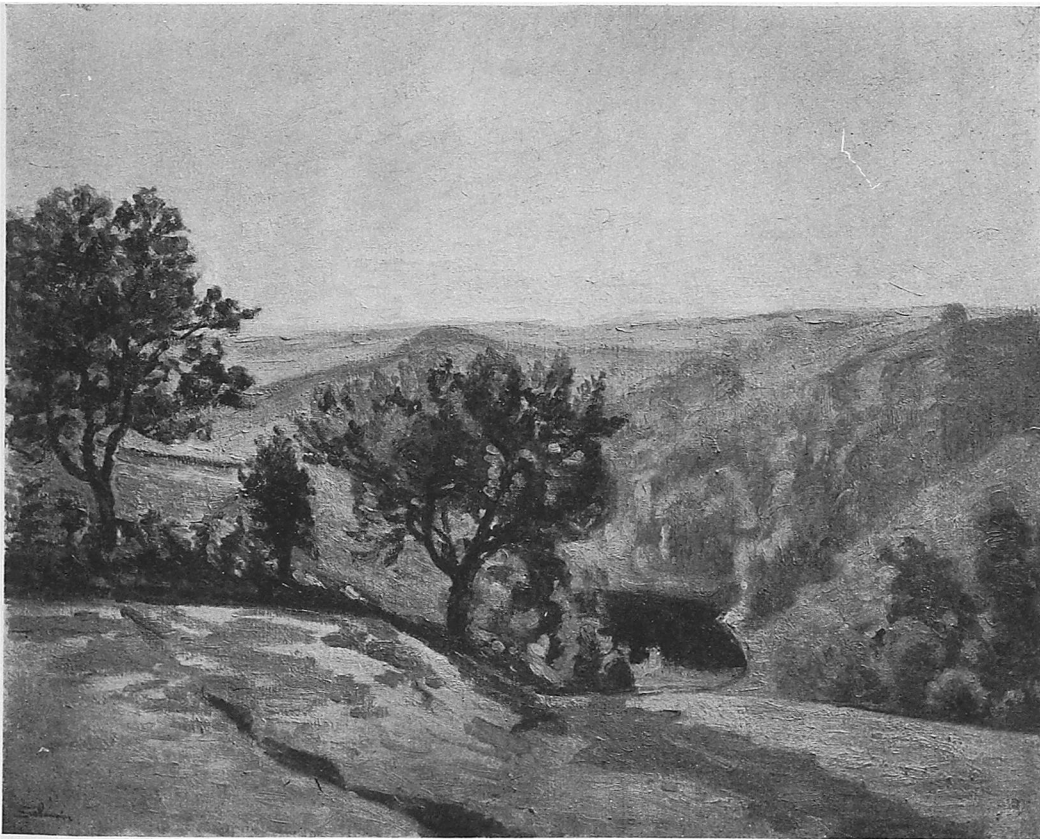
Last winter, one of his great admirers among the French critics wrote: "He is seventy-three years old, and he is young. Young, robust and active. His last works brought from Trayas, from Saint-Palais, or from the Crozant are the best we have

seen. Compare them with a Guillaumin of 1885, and you will see that the old and new are of the same order, of equal quality."

"Guillaumin is one of our greatest landscapists. He possesses the strong trait; fecundity. The more he paints, the more he rises and renews himself, because his art is one and many, like nature."

This same critic wrote of him, just as enthusiastically, years ago, and it is seldom that a French critic feels exactly the same about a man's work after many years; for many, many new, interesting things have turned up in the meantime.

One of Guillaumin's pet expressions is that he paints for ten years hence, when time will have given his pictures the precious patina that ripens or ruins. In his case, judging from the past, it ripens. This



CROZANT PUY BARION, MATIN BLEU. (SUNRISE) —Collection Charles L. Borgmeyer, New York
By ARMAND GUILLAUMIN



SAMOIS. PRES FOUNTAINEBLEAU. APRIL, 1902
 BY ARMAND GUILLAUMIN

is one of the reasons why he always mixes his colors on the palette, never on the canvas. The latter method, he holds, gives bad tones, and adds that a great deal of it is a matter of chance anyway, as time modifies them all. From the beginning Guillaumin has been accused of brutality in his work. Brutal, Guillaumin is, when the subject demands it, but tender also. He does not "dress up" nature, he simply interprets her. He is according to the exigencies of the case, severe, gruff, calm; always clean, frank and truthful. But never insipid. His manner of painting, often calls forth this accusation of brutality. For he paints resolutely, with a large touch, with a bold stroke, almost fiercely. But brutally, no! True, the color is often taken directly

from the tube, without mixing, but it is attenuated, weakened, enveloped, completed and thence harmonized by an equally clear neighboring tone, as vibrating as itself. The juxtaposition one after another, of many other tones, equally pure, makes a complete accord of serenity, and rich harmony.

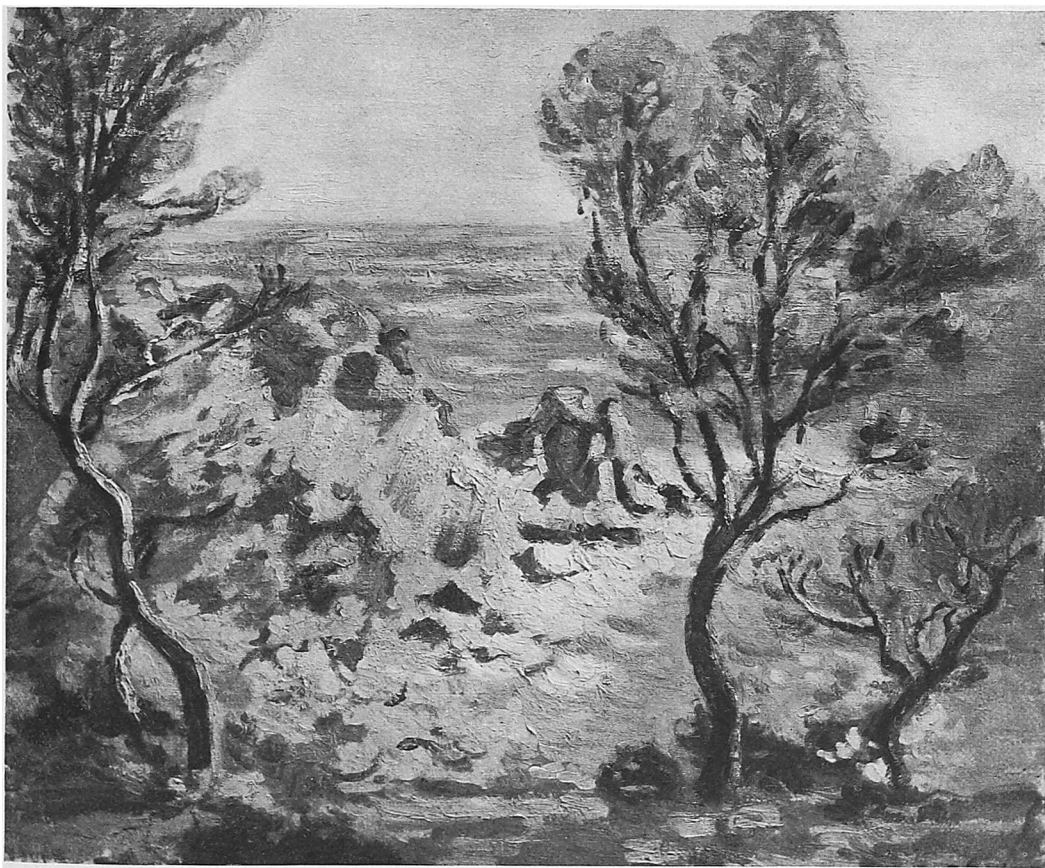
As far back as in 1881, Huysmann spoke of this very personal faculty of obtaining these wonderfully delicate effects by violent processes. "This has led many," he wrote, "to confound the actual appearance of the canvas with the sentiment it expresses: his is a palette composed exclusively of pure tones; but their combination abounds with harmony and the result is analogous to the country itself."

M. Blot, speaking of this same cry of

brutality said: "It is beautiful, vibrant music, colored, rich and full; a *crescendo* of allure and passion, rising to the trumpeting of a Wagnerian harmony.

I, myself, have several times heard different ones say "Guillaumin's pictures are too brutal for me: they are too rough. You never see nature like that!" Ah, what little creatures we are after all, we who dwell in the cities and pass our lives under the glare of an electric light; we who sleep high up in a small room, never breathing the air of open heaven; we who hide ourselves away from the sea and land with its wondrous works of God! How many of us who essay to judge pictures, seen by the God-given eyes of such as Guillaumin have seen nature in places like the Valley of the Creuse?

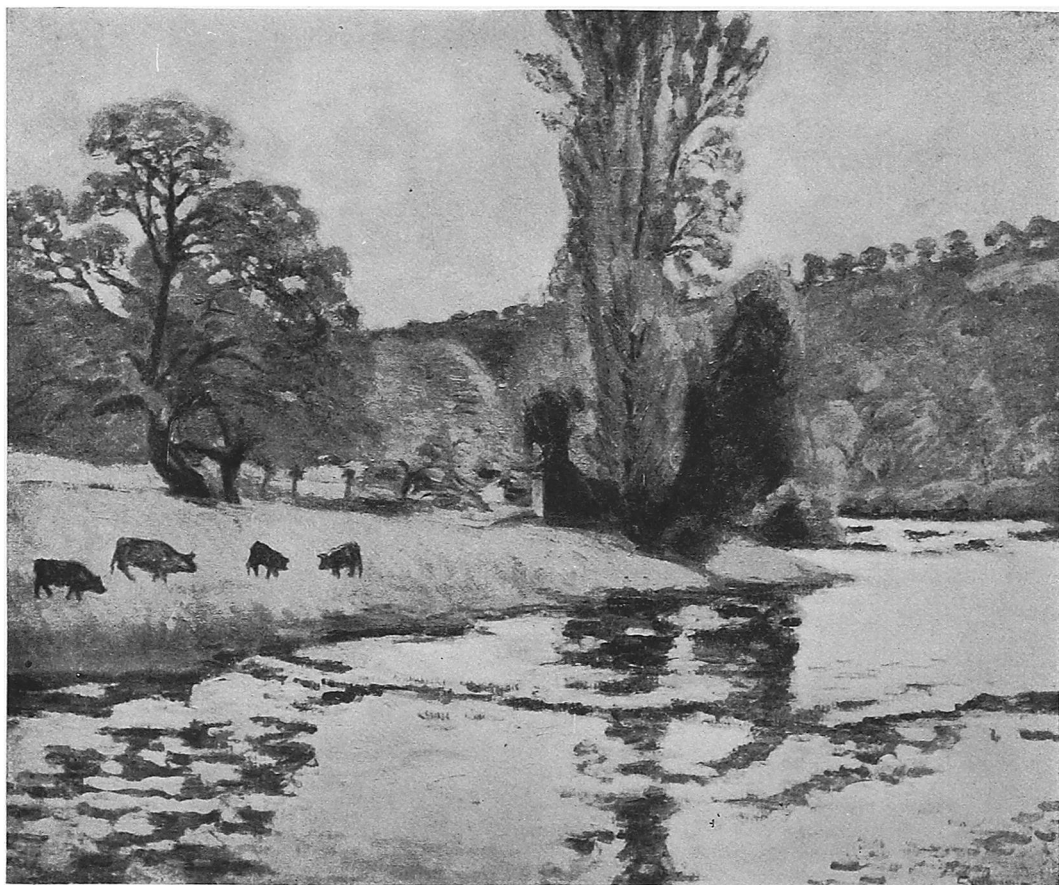
How many of us in New York, Chicago, aye, even in Paris, Lyons and Marseilles know the peasant men and women, who dwell in this rock-ribbed land of the Creuse; who, like the hills and valleys which they inhabit, have something of the austere dignity of their native, rough soil! Would you perhaps take off their peasant clothes, would you have them don the gaudy garments of a *boulevardier* and discard the clothes their fathers have worn? Look at their faces, rough with the beating of wind and rain; at their bodies, gnarled as the old oaks upon their hillsides. Just as well say to Guillaumin: Paint these mountain fastnesses, these shut-in rivers, these bubbling torrents as if they were part of the forest of Fontainebleau, or the fertile fields of Lombardy. Turn these hidden paths in-



MONT SALVAUT, LE CRUSE, FEBRUARY, 1911, NEIGHBORHOOD OF TOULON, FRANCE

By ARMAND GUILLAUMIN

—Collection Charles L. Borgmeyer, New York



THE STREAM
By ARMAND GUILLAUMIN

—Courtesy Art Institute, Chicago

to a *Route Nationale* all swept clean for the tourist in his automobile.

How much wiser is Guillaumin, when he shows us his beloved *Crozan-Creuse*, clothed in the stunted and bent vegetation of its hillsides, its odd colored lava boulders raising their heads on every hill top: the valley bottoms rich and dark in the spring with verdure, or covered with sleet and murderous frost, white and scintillating under the pale sun of an early March morning.

No, we could not ask Guillaumin to change his ways even to please those who find him "brutal." There is something about this country, all twisted by volcanic forces; this country where all is old; re-

ligion, people, language and customs, that makes one, coming from the gaudiness of the city, feel dwarfed. One instinctively puts on the oldest, simplest and perhaps dirtiest clothes and gets into the life and spirit of the surroundings *quietly*.

If you study Guillaumin's pictures, you will see how he has not imposed himself upon the countries he has painted, but penetrated them, respected them. They are very different, these subjects. Guillaumin shows us the difference just as nature herself would. The *quais* of Paris and her suburbs are bathed in the soft, moist air of this city, and of no other place in the world. The fields of Provence, the shores of the Mediterranean where the geraniums and flower-

ing shrubs climb tree-high against the century-old olive trees, are the fields of Provence and the shores of the Mediterranean, and of no other places in the world.

Only one, who has learned something of the charm of listening to the voice of the wind as it passes through the trees, the roar of the river, and felt the fine, fresh air of the mountains, can understand the charm of what Guillaumin has put into paint.

We must see nature as it is before we draw our conclusions concerning the method in which it has been presented to us. If we think that art can only be adequately represented by a single method, we hamper ourselves and only enjoy nature's beautiful works as they are translated to us through the work of one man, or one school.

In life, we all know that experience is the best of all teachers; shall we then pass through life profiting nothing by all the work, all the mistakes, all the offers of new

joys of the great world of art simply because we are afraid of venturing into new experiences with our vision and our emotion?

M. Guillaumin tells me he painted near Paris until he won a lottery prize of 100,000 francs, in 1891, which enabled him to try his wings a bit. He gave up his position, and during the next few years went to *Saint Palais-sur-Mer*, at the mouth of the *Gironde*, then to *Agay*, near *Fregus* on the Mediterranean and to *Auvergne*, and then fell in love with the Creuse country. He worked, as he does now, at Crozant where the Rivers Creuse and Sedelle come together. The ruins of the old castle which dominate Crozant and the banks of the two rivers were his subjects. He made the discovery of this country in 1893 and he has gone there every year since. The Riviera has captured him a number of times and Holland once for about three months when he painted the windmills and canals



CROZANT. ROUTE DE SAINT SEBASTIEN. EFFET DE GELÉE BLANCHE, 1907
By ARMAND GUILLAUMIN

—Collection M. Delpuech, Paris



ROUTE DANS LE BROUILLARD ET GELÉE BLANCHE, 1910
By ARMAND GUILLAUMIN

—Collection M. Eugène Blot

around Saardam. It seems almost foolish to speak in detail of the pictures we have among our illustrations, for what has been said in general can be applied to them individually. The early, still-life, *La Marmite*, a black fork, a spoon and a napkin on a white table cloth, is a Chardin, Louis Vauxcelles says and no praise could be higher. It was the way I felt about Madame Guillaumin's *Plate of Onions*. Speaking in general of his snow scenes the same authority says: "They are the work of a master; the bluish hoarfrost powders the ground; snow beautifully outlines the skeleton of the trees and the bare branches; gray atmosphere over all: November."

I have often passed through the little village of Damiette, when entering or leaving

Paris. It has left an impression of a clean street with both sides bordered by white empty houses. Guillaumin lived and worked there a long time when he was still staying near home. Arsene Alexandre speaking of the same little hill-side town says: "The hill is not very wooded. It does not offer grand horizons, in fact it intercepts the view. There are not many milestones on the upland, not many trees on the slopes, but all this makes the play of light stronger and the colors more spread. Lower down one finds a valley the "Frenchiest," the most beribboned, the most panniered in France."

In thinking of these little "beribboned" towns, Guillaumin seems "out of the scene." I can feel that there is an intimacy of the

most touching kind between the simple, kindly man and the stern and hardy inhabitants of the rough hills of Crozant. It is this same feeling that makes me know many of the stories of his modesty are true.

He has had good, staunch friends who have, I imagine, turned from mere admirers and owners of his work to personal friends. Among them have been men like Messieurs Théodore Duret, Olivier Sainserre, Georges Lecomte, Gustave Geffroy, Personnaz, Hayashi, Joseph Reinach, Comte Doria, Pellerin, Viau, Leclanche, Dr. Paulin, Depeaux, Louis Bernard, Delpeuch, Laroche, Donop de Monchy, Baudin, Goujon, etc.

If you ask him what museums have his pictures, he mentions perhaps three, Brussels, Rouen and Limoges and forgets the Luxembourg. This excited my curiosity

and I found that his memory was indeed poor. The same way about exhibitions. No information whatever could I get from M. Guillaumin himself, but through the united efforts of several friends, I found that ten or twelve years after the Impressionists stopped exhibiting as a group (1886), *Durand-Ruel* (Paris) had an exhibition of his work. I have already quoted some of the things said at that time. In 1901, *Bernheim, Jeune*, had an exhibition when such names as the following appear as loaning pictures. Three from Madame Besnard; four from Count Doria; five from Durand-Ruel; one from Théodore Duret; nine from Georges Feydeau; two from M. Pellerin; two from M. Personnaz; one from Georges Petit; three from Doctor Viau; four from M. J. Strauss; three from M. Hessel. Many



EFFET DE NEIGE, CROZANT, 1906
By ARMAND GUILLAUMIN

—Collection M. Eugène Blot, Paris

of these owners appear again in a retrospective exhibition held in the *Galerie Montaigne* in 1913; but with new names added. A few of these are Messieurs Pierre Baudin, Bauer, Bernard, Louis Bernard-Goudchaux, Eugène Blot, Jacques Blot, Chapuis, Delpeuch, Gaston Devore, Goldschmidt, E. Goujon, P. Goujon, G. Hoentschel, Kapferer, Leclanché, Leite Mortague, Murot, A. Personnez, Saint Piot, Joseph Reinach, Schuffenecker, Olivier, Sainsère, Semenoff, Themanlys, Doctors Paulin, Viau and Gailard, and many others, all names well known in France as sound and discriminating judges of art.

The only time that I know of Guillaumin's work being shown here, was at the Hayashi Sale in New York in 1913; and there as I have said before only a few noticed what, to them was the work of an unknown man.

Liege and Ghent at their respective International exhibitions have also shown his work. All of this data represents the answers to many questions and is intensely uninteresting, I admit, except as it may aid someone else in compiling statistics on the life of Armand Guillaumin. One more thing in this section of material glory that you can skip if you wish, is this curious fact. After all these years of comparative neglect, except by a few, there are now two exhibitions of his work being held in Paris, as I write. The museums at Brussels and Ghent, have both bought large canvasses. It would look as though Armand Guillaumin's hour had come! More than most does this daring pioneer deserve it. You must remember that he was a member of that small band of men who, as Impressionists, stood the ridicule of the world and who influenced the fundamental principles of art of their generation in a degree and in ways that are only now finding their full appreciation. Guillaumin's paintings had their share in this influence. There is a personal atmosphere which is breathed by all who approach them in the right spirit. You

fall under this influence as you enter the Ryerson Collection of Modern Art at the Chicago Art Institute. In this collection you can get a very fair idea of Guillaumin's strength, color, vision and personal interpretation. You can see what they mean when they call him brutal; but stay long enough to see how well he knows the outlook of his land and his weather. Go into any of the Galleries in Paris where his pictures can be seen and see how in one bleak scene, he has shortened down the distances with the mist that will shortly bring the snow; and in another, how the trees are moaning and bending uneasily in the wind puffs, as though feeling the approaching storm! How eager and warm the look of the trees that have thrown off their winter covering under the breath of the warm sun of early springtime; see how they stand forth in all their delicate tracery against the background of the dazzling sky. How beautiful the hillsides, with their coverings of bush and shrubbery, their tender branches bursting forth with their abundance of new life. Compare his trees with those of others and see how his actually live and grow, see how his meadows give forth the fragrance of grass and water; feel their feeling of freshness, of depth, of coolness; and then recall that this is the work of a man who, at the ripe old age of seventy-three, continues in the same earnest search for truths as when he first entered the lists; who today possesses the same wonderful industry in garnering visions from Nature herself, and who has the same indifference to anything which may turn him aside from his first love, art, as he had forty or fifty years ago.

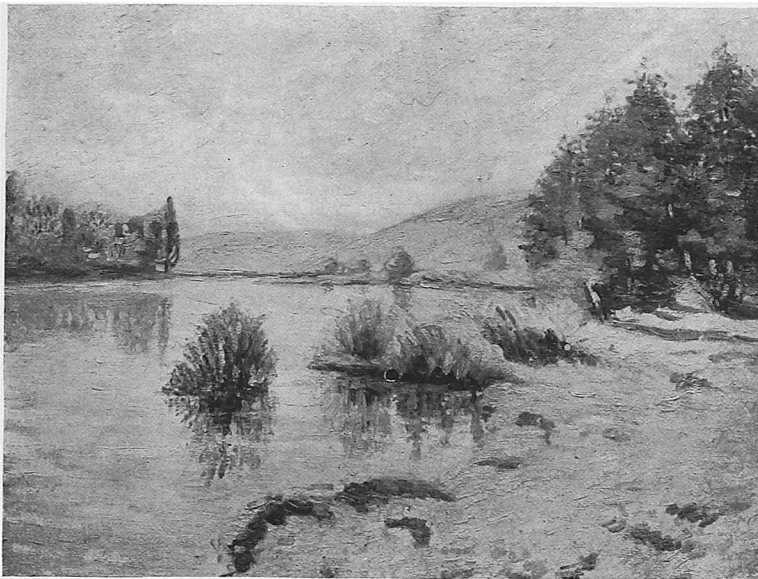
Guillaumin has no eye for the little fool things seen on a city boulevard, or on a Trouville beach or at a Monte Carlo Casino. Small curiosities of this kind, which may please the public, and which may make the visitor to a picture exhibition exclaim: "Yes, I remember that road very well—I have been boating there—I have lunched

there!" Small curiosities of this kind do not fit in with his far-reaching landscape, where the human voice sounds thinly under the vast expanse of the overhanging heavens. How much better this simple, good man knows his loved land, with its rugged rocks and its fierce winds, and its deep wood secrets than we, the public; we of the brightly electric-lighted homes and streets, frequenters of noisy ragtime restaurants, where the tango is danced, and cabaret performers display their distorted art. What part have we in the sun-lit silences and mysteries of the hill-tops; how can we use our imagination upon the things the good God places before us. What can be the nature of our understanding, we who haunt these city dens of excitement? When we gaze upon the *Angelus* of Millet, can our imagination hear with these weary kneeling peasants the bells of the little church of Saint Michel, as it calls the country side to prayer? Can we say with them: "Mary, Mother! We thank thee for our life and health and happiness"?

Let us hie ourselves away from these city

resorts of stagnant heat and cocktail smells, let us seek the places where the pure air, warm and soothing, may blow upon our faces; let us wander about over the quiet bare hill-spaces, let us wander through the forests. Let us get some of the rest of great nature into our fretted, weary minds, and then let us come back with our faces changed, with our looks softened, to show that peace and gentleness have entered to take the place of worry and envy.

Let me induce those to whom change is the ever present goal, and the only thing which never tires; those to whom the new is the only mate always met with gladness, let me induce you to cultivate the habit of looking at out-door, uncivilized, primal nature, if not in real life, then through such pictures as those painted by Armand Guillaumin, the ever-young man, who, with all the years of experience behind him, says frankly: "I know I can do nothing as well as I wish to do it, but I do it as well as I can. Each new canvas makes me eager, not anxious; every hill, meadow, stream, offers to me a new opportunity."



LANDSCAPE AND RIVER
By ARMAND GUILLAUMIN

—Collection M. George Feydeau, Paris